

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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P R 032025Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0973

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 04 PARIS 17394

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE -- JUNE

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REF: PARIS 14263

SUMMARY. IT HAS BEEN A HECTIC MONTH FOR INTERNAL POLITICS IN FRANCE, WITH THE UDR AND REFORMIST ASSIZES, EDUCATION AND DIVORCE REFORMS IN THE ASSEMBLY AND THE BY-ELECTION. FURTHERMORE, JUNE HAS SEEN PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC MAKE THE TRANSITION FROM POLITICIAN TO FULL-TIME STATESMAN. BUT THOUGH PRESIDENT GISCARD, IN HIS FIRE-SIDE CHAT OF JUNE 30, MAY HAVE TOLD THE FRENCH TO GO OFF AND ENJOY THEIR VACATION, ADDING THAT THEY REALLY HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, IN FACT A NUMBER OF UNSETTLING EVENTS OCCURRED DURING THE LAST THIRTY DAYS, INCLUDING THE AIRCRAFT "SALE OF THE CENTURY" THAT THE FRENCH LOST AND THE CRISIS IN THE FRENCH PRESS. IN ADDITION, ALTHOUGH A SOFRES POLL GAVE GISCARD A THREE PERCENT INCREASE IN POPULARITY OVER MAY, A "PUBLIME-TRIE" POLL SHOWED THAT 53 PERCENT OF THE FRENCH WOULD NOW VOTE LEFT WERE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS TO BE HELD. FINALLY, IMPORTANT REFORMS THE GOVERNMENT WAS PUSHING THROUGH THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HAVE, IN THE RUSH TO "GET SOMETHING" BEFORE THE CLOSE OF THIS ASSEMBLY SESSION, BEEN SO DILUTED THAT SOME OF THEM NO LONGER CONSTITUTE REAL REFORM AT ALL. UNEMPLOYMENT IS HIGH AND RISING, AND A HALF-MILLION YOUNG ARE SOON TO ENTER THE LABOR MARKET. PERHAPS GISCARD, AS HE REMARKED IN HIS FIRESIDE CHAT, FEELS HE CAN WAIT UNTIL AUTUMN TO ATTACK THE BIG PROBLEMS: THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN. BUT WHEN FALL DOES COME HOPEFULLY HE WILL HAVE SOLID PROPOSALS AT HAND TO DEAL WITH THE CURRENT PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE PRESS. IN JUNE THE FRENCH PRESS UNDERWENT A SERIES OF CRISES UNPARALLELED IN RECENT HISTORY. ON JUNE 12 BERNARD CABANES, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, WAS WOUNDED BY A BOMB APPARENTLY DESTINED FOR ANOTHER BERNARD CABANES, PUBLISHER OF "PARISIEN LIBERE", A NEWSPAPER WITH THE LARGEST CIRCULATION IN FRANCE. "PARISIEN LIBERE" HAS BEEN IN THE THROES OF A STRUGGLE WITH CGT-LIVRE, THE COMMUNIST-LED UNION WHICH HOLDS A MONOPOLY (INCLUDING HIRING HALL) OVER LABOR WITHIN PRINTING CONCERNS. ON SATURDAY THE 14TH CABANES DIED, AND THE INCIDENT, ALREADY DEPLORED, BECAME AN OUTRAGE

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IN A COUNTRY WHERE FREEDOM TO PUBLISH IS SACROSANCT. CURIOUSLY, HOWEVER, ONLY TWO WEEKS WERE REQUIRED FOR THE PUBLIC TO LOSE INTERESTS IN THE AFFAIR, IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT PONIATOWSKI SWORE THE PERPETRATORS WOULD BE FOUND. SECONDLY GASTON DEFFERRE, SOCIALIST MAYOR OF MARSEILLE AND OWNER OF THE SOCIALIST DAILY "PROVENCAL", HAS BEEN CALLED TO TASK FOR ALLEGED DISTORTION OF THE NEWS IN HIS PAPER. THE RADICAL FEDERATION

OF THE BOUCHES-DU-RHONE HAS FOUNDED A COMMITTEE TO WATCH OVER "PROVENCAL", REMINDING DEFFERRE AT THE SAME TIME THAT HIS OWN WIFE HEADS A SIMILAR UNION OF THE LEFT COMMITTEE THAT OVERSEES THE OBJECTIVITY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTS. THIS DUAL REVERSE CENSORSHIP THREATENS TO EVOLVE INTO A FRUITLESS VERBAL SKIRMISH. FINALLY, ROBERT HERSANT, A CENTRIST DEPUTY WITH A QUESTIONABLE WORLD WAR II RECORD, BOUGHT CONTROLLING INTEREST IN THE MAJOR MORNING DAILY "FIGARO" AGAINST OPPOSITION FROM "FIGARO" STAFF. HERSANT, FRANCE'S LORD BEAVERBROOK, ALREADY OWNS A NUMBER OF MAJOR PUBLICATIONS, BUT HIS ROUGH BUSINESS TECHNIQUES AND ALLEGED COLLABORATIONIST PAST HAVE SO UPSET A LARGE NUMBER OF "FIGARO" STAFF THAT THE PAPER WENT ON A ONE-DAY STRIKE TO PROTEST HERSANT'S ACQUISITION. AS "FIGARO" IS THE

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P R 032025Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

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BASICALLY PRO-GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER WITH THE LARGEST CIRCULATION
AND PRESTIGE, IT CAN BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED THAT THE
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ELYSEE IS CLOSELY FOLLOWING THE AFFAIR.

2. GOVERNMENT REFORM. IN THE DOMAINS OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS,
ECONOMICS AND EDUCATION, REFORM -- OR THE NEED FOR
IT -- WAS NEWS IN A NUMBER OF WAYS DURING JUNE. IN
MOST MAJOR CITIES PROSTITUTES OCCUPIED CHURCHES UNTIL
THEY WERE EVICTED BY ORDER OF PONIATOWSKI. THE LEFT
IMMEDIATELY DEMANDED REVISION OF THE 1946 LAW REGULATING
PROSTITUTION, AND PONIATOWSKI ADMITTED THAT THE LAW WAS
BOTH HYPOCRITICAL AND CONTRADICTORY. ON THE OTHER
HAND, THE ASSEMBLY PASSED (AND THE SENATE SEEMS LIKELY
TO DO ALSO) THE CONTROVERSIAL DIVORCE BILL MODIFYING
171 YEAR-OLD STATUTES. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT ONLY 25
PERCENT OF THE VOTES COMING FROM THE GOVERNMENT MAJOR-
ITY WERE NAYS, LEADING MINISTER OF JUSTICE LECANUET TO
REMARK AFTERWARDS THAT THE BILL WOULD HAVE PASSED EVEN
WITHOUT FULL SUPPORT FROM THE OPPOSITION. ALSO PASSED
WAS THE SEVENTH PLAN, DESTINED TO PULL FRANCE
OUT OF HER CURRENT ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES. ON THE
OTHER HAND PROPOSED REFORM IN PROPERTY LAWS IS GETTING
NOWHERE; AND THE MUCH-VAUNTED HABY BILL TO RESTRUCTURE
THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM HAS SEEN WATERED DOWN TO THE
POINT OF BECOMING A DISAPPOINTMENT EVEN TO THE PROGRES-
SIVE ELEMENTS OF GISCARD'S MAJORITY. IN FACT, NO LESS
THAN NINE IMPORTANT REFORMS WERE RUSHED THROUGH THE
SENATE OR THE ASSEMBLY ON THE LAST TWO DAYS OF THEIR
SITTING. THE FINAL SESSION ON JUNE 30, USUALLY AN
OCCASION OF SELF-CONGRATULATION, WAS MARKED IN BOTH
HOUSES BY CONFUSION AND BITTERNESS OVER AN OVERBURDENED
AGENDA AND THE TENDENCY TO RUBBER STAMP. EDGAR FAURE
AND ALAIN POHER, PRESIDENTS RESPECTIVELY OF THE ASSEMBLY

AND THE SENATE, CALLED FOR MODIFICATION OF PARLIAMEN-
TARY WORK METHODS, AND CHIRAC JOINED HIS VOICE TO
THEIRS. BUT IN A COUNTRY OF SYSTEMATIC DOUBTERS AND
PEOPLE WHO ADHERE TO THEIR VACATION SCHEDULE LIKE CLOCK-
WORK' IT SEEMS IMPROBABLE THAT SUCH MODIFICATION WILL
COME ABOUT IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

3. MAJORITY ATTACKS THE LEFT. A NUMBER OF TIMES DURING
THE MONTH, MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR PONIATOWSKI
VIOLENTLY CRITICIZED THE LEFT, CALLING MITTERRAND A
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FULL-TIME LOSER AND MARXISM AN ARCHAIC CONCEPT. THE
CABANES AFFAIR MENTIONED ABOVE PROVIDED AN OCCASION
FOR RENEWED ATTACKS, IN WHICH THE MORE SUBDUED VOICE
OF CHIRAC WAS ALSO HEARD. THE RESULT WAS TO ELICIT
FROM THE LEFT ACCUSATIONS OF FASCISM AND PATRIMONIAL
GOVERNMENT. FINALLY PONIATOWSKI, IN A CONSCIOUS ATTEMPT
TO WOO MORE MODERATE SOCIALISTS FROM THE LEFT CAMP,
DECLARED THE PC/PS ALLIANCE TO BE "AGAINST NATURE" AND
INVITED "REPUBLICAN" (I.E. NON-COMMUNIST) SOCIALISTS
TO JOIN THE MAJORITY. WHILE SUCH EXCHANGES ARE NOTHING
NEW, THEY ASSUMED PARTICULAR VEHEMENCE THIS MONTH, WITH
THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR WARNING AGAINST "PORTUGA-
LIZATION" OF FRANCE, AND PIERRE MAUROY, PS NUMBER TWO,
DEPLORING THE BLEAK PROSPECTS OF THE ADVANCED LIBERAL
SOCIETY. THE MAJORITY HAS SOME REASON TO WORRY, FOR IF
A SOFRES POLL CONDUCTED ON JUNE 24 SHOWS GISCARD'S
POPULARITY TO HAVE RISEN SLIGHTLY, A "PUBLIMETRIE"
CONDUCTED IN THE SAME MONTH SHOWS THAT 53 PERCENT WOULD
VOTE LEFT IF LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS WERE HELD NOW.

4. BY-ELECTIONS. IN THE SEINE-MARITIME JUNE 15 BY-
ELECTIONS (PARIS 15502), ALTHOUGH THE UDR CANDIDATE
WON -- ACQUIRING 53 PERCENT OF THE VOTE TO THE PC
CANDIDATE'S 47 PERCENT -- THE UNITED LEFT SHOWED OVERALL
PROGRESSION IN THE SECOND (FINAL) ROUND AGAINST THE
JUNE 8 FIRST ROUND. THE MAJORITY AND THE LEFT BROUGHT
IN MAJOR FIGURES TO SUPPORT THEIR RESPECTIVE CANDIDATES,
WHICH BOTH SETS THE TONE FOR THE PROBABLE WAY IN
WHICH FUTURE BY-ELECTIONS WILL BE FOUGHT AND SHOWS
THE RENEWED VIGOR OF THE UDR.

5. PLUTON AND DJIBOUTI. AMONG THE MANY SIDE ISSUES
THAT EMERGED TO CONCERN THE GOVERNMENT DURING JUNE TWO
WERE DOMINANT: THE FUTURE OF THE FRENCH TERRITORIES OF
AFARS AND ISSAS (DJIBOUTI) AND OF THE COMOROS AND THE
EVENTUAL IMPLANTATION OF PLUTON MISSILES, BOTH IN
FRANCE AND GERMANY. IN THE FORMER SITUATION, A NUMBER
OF VIOLENT DEATHS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM DJIBOUTI IN

RECENT WEEKS, AND THE METROPOLITAN LEFT HAS VOICED ITS
SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE FUTURE

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STATUS OF STRETAGICALLY LOCATED DJIBOUTI AS SEEN BY THE
GOF, HOWEVER, IS FAR MORE COMPLICATED (PARIS 13672).
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IN ADDITION, INDEPENDENCE FOR THE
COMORES ISLANDS, VOTED BY THE ASSEMBLY ON JUNE 26 AND
ADOPTED AT MONTH'S END BY THE SENATE FOUR DAYS LATER,
THREATENS TO BECOME A DIFFICULT MEASURE TO CARRY OUT
DUE TO LAST MINUTE MODIFICATIONS IN THE INDEPENDENCE
BILL (PARIS 12001). LASTLY ON JUNE 22, A PS-SPONSORED
PROTEST TOOK PLACE IN FOUGERAIS, IN WHICH BOTH GERMANS
AND SWISS TOOK PART, AGAINST THE IMPLANTING OF PLUTON
MISSILES. TWO DAYS LATER PCF SECRETARY-GENERAL MARCHAIS
DENOUNCED THE PROJECTED STATIONING OF FRENCH TACTICAL
NUCLEAR MISSILES IN GERMANY, AND FOUND SYMPATHY WITH
MUCH OF THE MAJORITY AS WELL AS THE LEFT. THE GOVERN-
MENT WILL BE HARD PUT TO QUIET THE GROWING PROTESTS OF
THE OPPOSITION ON THIS ISSUE. ON THE OTHER HAND, LEFT
AND RIGHT ALIKE UNITED TO LAMENT THE LOSS OF THE NATO
PLANE DEAL TO THE AMERICANS. THE DEATH OF GENERAL STEH-
LIN, SO INTIMATELY INVOLVED IN THE "MARCHE DU SIECLE",
HIGHLIGHTED THE "TRAGEDY" OF LOSING OUT TO THE
AMERICANS ON THIS BIG DEAL.

6. MICHEL JOBERT. JOBERT CONTINUES TO REAR HIS HEAD,
ALBEIT THE FLAIR SEEMS TO HAVE WANED. IN THE CANTONAL
BY-ELECTIONS ON JUNE 15, THE MOUVEMENT DES DEMOCRATES
CANDIDATE RECEIVED ONLY 4.3 PERCENT OF THE VOTE, A
DROP OF 10 PERCENT FROM SEPTEMBER 1973, WHEN JOBERT
HIMSELF RAN, ALSO IN AMIENS. MOREOVER, IN THE LE HAVRE
ELECTIONS MENTIONED ABOVE, THE JOBERTIAN CANDIDATE
RECEIVED BARELY 7PERCENT OF THE VOTE. NEVERTHELESS
JOBERT CONTINUES TO ATTACK GISCARD WITH VEHEMENCE,
ACCUSING HIM OF EVERYTHING FROM SELLING OUT FRANCE TO
THE AMERICANS TO OUTRIGHT HYPOCRISY WHEN DEALING WITH
THE FRENCH PEOPLE. IN SPITE OF CONTINUING TO ATTRACT
A CERTAIN PUBLICITY' HOWEVER, IT SEEMS APPARENT THAT
JOBERT, FOR THE PRESENT, IS NOT A FORCE TO BE RECKONED
WITH.

7. THE UDR AND THE IR. THE UDR SHOWED A NEW COMBATIVEN-
ESS WITHIN THE GISCARDIAN MAJORITY TOWARD THE END OF

JUNE IN THE WAKE OF THE JUNE 14-15 GAULLIST NATIONAL CONVENTION IN NICE (PARIS 16987). AT THAT CONVENTION, JACQUES CHIRAC ONCE AGAIN SHOWED EVIDENCE OF EXCEPTIONAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POLITICAL JUDGMENT BY RESIGNING AS SECRETARY GENERAL AND TURNING OVER THE REINS TO A TOTALLY LOYAL LIEUTENANT, ANDRE BORD. IN SO DOING HE LAID ASIDE THE MANTLE OF POLITICIAN AND MOVED DEFTLY AHEAD OF HIS RIVAL PONIA-TOWSKI IN THEIR UNSPOKEN RACE FOR THE LIMELIGHT. CHIRAC'S ACT WAS INTERPRETED WITHIN THE UDR AS A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN THE PARTY'S FUTURE; THE RESULT WAS A REASSERTION BY GAULLISTS OF THE UDR'S ROLE AS THE LEADING ELEMENT OF THE MAJORITY. THE NEW SECRETARY GENERAL BORD WILL CONTINUE TO LEAD THE PARTY IN CHIRAC'S IMAGE, AND UNDOUBTEDLY UNDER HIS TUTELAGE, THOUGH CHIRAC HAS PUBLICLY DECLARED HE NOW INTENDS TO DEVOTE ALL OF HIS ENERGY TO THE AFFAIRS OF STATE. BY CONTRAST, THE IR HAS FAILED TO TAKE ON MUCH POLITICAL WEIGHT SINCE GISCARD'S ELECTION, EVEN WITH A "HEAVY" LIKE PONIATOWSKI AS PARTY PRESIDENT. THE BEST PONIA COULD DO IN THE WAY OF REJOINER TO THE UDR'S RESURGENCE WAS TO DECLARE, AT THE IR NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING JUNE 26, THAT "EVERY DAY MORE AND MORE FRENCHMEN WISH TO EXPRESS (THEIR) INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT, (THEIR) PERSONAL SUPPORT FOR THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, BY COMING TOGETHER OUTSIDE THE BOUNDARIES OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES." UNDOUBTEDLY, THE UDR AND IR WILL CONTINUE TO INDULGE IN DISCREET HAIR-PULLING DESPITE GISCARD'S APPEALS FOR A SUPRA-PARTY POLITICAL MOVEMENT THAT WOULD RISE ABOVE UDR/IR CONTENTIONS. BUT NEITHER GISCARD NOR CHIRAC HAS ANY INTEREST FOR THE PRESENT IN LETTING THE COMPETITION BECOME TOO KEEN. CYNICS, AMONG WHOM ARE A NUMBER OF EMBASSY OBSERVERS, SEE THE SO-CALLED CHIRAC-PONIATOWSKI COMPETITION FOR POWER AS A SKILLFUL GIMMICK DESIGNED TO PERSUADE VOTERS THAT IF THEY ARE SEEKING ALTERNATIVES THEY CAN FIND THEM WITHOUT TURNING TO THE SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST UNION OF THE LEFT. PERSONAL RIVALRY MAY BE AN ELEMENT IN ALL THIS, BUT WE FAIL TO SEE ANY ESSENTIAL POLICY DIFFERENCES SEPARATING GISCARD, PONIATOWSKI AND CHIRAC.

8. THE CENTER. THE FEDERATION OF REFORMERS (PARIS A-285) DECLARED ON JUNE 14 THAT ITS FIRST SECRETARY WOULD BE ANDRE DILIGENT, FORMER SENATOR AND DEPUTY, AND ITS SPOKESMAN BERNARD STASI. IN EFFECT, HOWEVER, THESE POSTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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P R 032025Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0976

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ARE BASICALLY SYMBOLIC, AND THE FEDERATION WILL CONTINUE TO BE "GOVERNED" -- IF SUCH A WORD CAN BE APPLIED TO THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CENTER -- BY THE SECRETARIAT COMPOSED OF ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM EACH OF THE MAJOR PARTIES INVOLVED. JEAN-JACQUES SERVAN-SCHREIBER HAS ANNOUNCED HE WILL QUIT THE PRESIDENCY OF THE RADICAL PARTY. AT ANY RATE, AFTER ITS FLURRY OF ACTIVITY IN JUNE, WE CAN EXPECT TO SEE THE CENTER SLIP INTO ITS USUAL CONFUSED, AND CONFUSING, BACKGROUND.

9. THE LEFT. THE MONTH OF JUNE WAS DOMINATED BY FALL-OUT FROM THE QUOTIDIEN DE PARIS/REPUBLICA AFFAIR (SEE PARIS 16305 AND 16559) AND THE SOCIALIST (PS) CONVENTION ON AUTOGESTION (WORKER-MANAGEMENT, PARIS 16458). IN SPITE OF BITTER ARGUMENTATION WITHIN THE UNITED LEFT, THE OPPOSITION STILL HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO MOBILIZE FRENCH PUBLIC OPINION ON THE ECONOMIC ISSUES WHICH THE UNION OF THE LEFT SUMMIT MEETING JUNE 19 DEFINED AS CRITICAL (REF PARIS 16162). IN THE FACE OF RISING UNEMPLOYMENT, BOTH PS AND PCF HAVE REDOUBLED THEIR EFFORTS AT GRASS-ROOTS ORGANIZING AND PROPAGANDA. THE "REPUBLICA" AFFAIR IS PROVIDING A USEFUL DEMONSTRATION OF BOTH COMMUNIST DEMAGOGUERY AND SOCIALIST DISTORTION. WHILE THE AUDIENCE FOR THIS DEBATE WITHIN THE LEFT IS LARGE AND PARTISAN, THE NET EFFECT ON THE WIDER FRENCH PUBLIC SEEMS TO BE A FURTHER REMINDER THAT FAR FROM BEING A UNIFIED OPPOSITION WHICH PRESENTS A PROGRAMMED ALTERNATIVE TO GISCARD, THE UNION OF THE LEFT IS A MASS OF CONFLICTING GROUPS AND PARTIES.

10. PARIS TO HAVE A MAYOR. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 178 YEARS PARIS IS TO HAVE A MAYOR, TO BE ELECTED AT THE NATIONWIDE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN 1977. POSTS FOR THE 20 LOCAL MAYORS ARE TO BE ABOLISHED, AND POLICY LINES WILL BE SET BY THE MAYOR'S OFFICE INSTEAD OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, AS HAS BEEN THE CASE UNTIL NOW. THE MAYOR, TO BE ELECTED FOR A SIX-YEAR TERM, WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR MORE THAN TWO TERMS. THIS IS WELCOME NEWS FOR THE CAPITAL CITY, WHICH HAS SUFFERED TOO LONG UNDER A CUMBERSOME AND UNRESPONSIVE SYSTEM. IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT THE MAYOR OF PARIS WILL ASSUME AN IMAGE AKIN TO THAT OF THE MAYOR OF A LARGE US CITY, AND WILL IN CERTAIN RESPECTS BYPASS THE PREFECT, IF NOT IN RANK, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AT LEAST IN PRESTIGE.

11. RUMORED CABINET CHANGES. A NUMBER OF RUMORS HAVE SURFACED OR RESURFACED DURING THE PAST MONTH. THE MOST PLAUSIBLE ARE THE FOLLOWING: ANDRE ROSSI, GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN AND STATE SECRETARY, WILL ACQUIRE A DIFFERENT STATE SECRETARY POSITION. MINISTER OF EDUCATION HABY WILL ALSO DEPART, LEAVING THE WAY OPEN FOR NEEDED REFORMS (SEE PARA 3 ABOVE). STATE SECRETARIES FRANCOISE GIROUD AND GABRIEL PERONNET WILL CONTEST THE PRESIDENCY OF THE RADICAL PARTY. FRANCOISE GIROUD IS DRAWING EVER FURTHER AWAY FROM PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC AND AWAITING THE RIGHT MOMENT TO LEAVE THE GOVERNMENT.

12. BONNES VACANCES. PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING, IN HIS SIXTH TELEVISED FIRESIDE CHAT ON JUNE 30 (PARIS 17104) TOLD THE FRENCH IN EFFECT THAT THEY LIVE IN THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS. "FRANCE IS A SOLID COUNTRY," HE SAID, ADDING IT WAS VACATION TIME AND THAT WHATEVER PROBLEMS WERE AROUND COULD EASILY WAIT OUT THE SUMMER. BUT THOUGH THAT MIGHT STRIKE THE RIGHT TONE WITH HIS COMPATRIOTS, THE PRESIDENT LATER WILL HAVE TO TURN HIS ATTENTION ONTO UNEMPLOYMENT, EDUCATIONAL REFORM, AND DETERIORATING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ELYSEE AND THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. HE GAVE THE FRENCH A SUMMER ASPIRIN, BUT IT IS ONLY A PAIN-KILLER AND THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS REMAIN. THE BAD NEWS WILL COME THIS FALL -- AND THE PUBLIC WILL BE CLOSELY WATCHING TO SEE WHETHER THE DOCTOR BRINGS SOMETHING MORE THAN A PALLIATIVE.

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Message Attributes

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Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
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Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRENCH INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE -- JUNE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, FR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006